

1885.

NEW ZEALAND.

# PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF THE NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE.

(PAPERS RELATING THERETO.)

[In continuation of A.—8, 1885.]

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

No. 6.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 1st July, 1885.

I have more than once referred to articles in the French papers relating to the New Hebrides. One has just appeared in the *Économiste Français*, of which the following is a translation :—

“We have already made known the initiative taken by the *Société Caledonienne* for the effectual occupation of the New Hebrides by France pending the abrogation of the understanding by which England and France have hitherto interdicted it to themselves. As this state of things threatens to be prolonged for some time further, the company has thought it necessary to take further action in their scheme for the colonization of the New Hebrides Group, in order to oblige our Government to come out of its somewhat forced inaction, and at the same time to lessen the force of the reasons our neighbours may oppose to an effectual intervention by France. The company offers the following advantages to intending colonists, in a splendid valley near the establishment of Anabron, where already there are many planters in full prosperity, viz.: Five hectares of fertile and well-watered land, to be augmented according to the work done by each colonist, with all necessary tools, and subsistence until the first harvest in six months. The term of location will be fixed by agreement. The company engages to buy the products of the colonists at current rates, and the colonists on their part engage only to purchase the goods necessary for their plantations from the company. The company is to receive for the location one-eighth of the crops. Rice, potatoes, and other vegetables, and the sugar cane thrive admirably in all this land, through which two rivers run. The valley is only three kilomètres from Port Villa, one of the company's principal settlements. Poultry succeed admirably, and wild pigs abound, which the aboriginal natives sell at five centimes the kilogramme. There is no difficulty in cultivating the soil, and the timber which covers it is soft. The climate is favourable, and, although there is fever, there is no danger, as is shown by the experience of many company's colonists who have resided for some time in the islands.”

It is evident, therefore, that the French mean to push their way in the New Hebrides, always with the political object in view of ultimate annexation.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
F. D. BELL.

